

## Leptospirosis Fact Sheet

### What is leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria *Leptospira* sp. Leptospirosis occurs worldwide, including Jamaica. Outbreaks can increase following excessive rainfall or flooding.



### How do people get leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans through cuts of the skin, or through the eyes, nose and mouth with water contaminated with the urine of infected animals. Leptospirosis can occasionally also be transmitted through the drinking of water or ingestion of food contaminated with urine of infected animals, often rats.

### Which animals can infect people with leptospirosis?

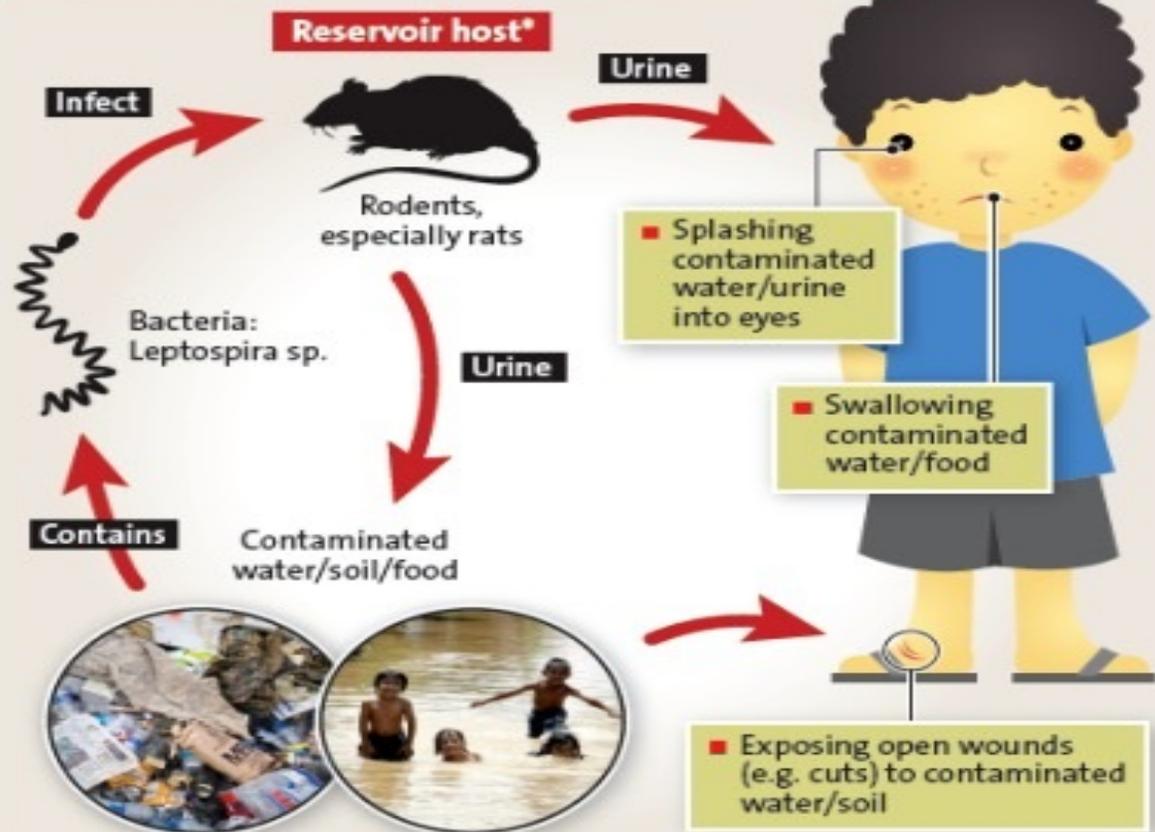
Virtually all wild and domestic mammals can.

Rodents were the first recognized carriers of leptospirosis and are considered the primary source of infection to human beings.

Cattle, buffaloes, horses, sheep, goat, pigs and dogs are also considered common reservoirs of the bacteria that cause leptospirosis.

# How you can get infected [www.mayaclinic.in](http://www.mayaclinic.in)

## Leptospirosis



\*Reservoir hosts are animals that harbors or nourishes a pathogen (a harmful organism) and serves as a source of infection.

### Who is at risk from leptospirosis?

Everybody is at risk.

The main occupational groups at risk include:

- Farm and agricultural workers
- Pet shop workers
- Veterinarians
- Sewer workers
- Abattoir workers
- Meat handlers
- Military personnel
- Warehouse workers
- Survivors of natural disasters (e.g., flooding)
- People engaging in recreational water sports (swimming, etc)

In some countries, practically the whole population is at risk as a result of high exposure to contaminated water in daily activities, e.g. working in paddies and sugarcane plantations.

## What are the signs and symptoms of leptospirosis?

The incubation period of leptospirosis is usually 5–14 days, with a range of 2–30 days. The symptoms following infection with leptospira can vary from a fever, muscle pain, jaundice (yellowing of eyes, membranes, etc.), and “flu-like” symptoms.

## How do you treat leptospirosis?

If you have symptoms of leptospirosis consult a doctor.

## How do you prevent leptospirosis?

Measures to prevent transmission of leptospirosis include the following:

- Wearing protective clothing (boots, gloves, spectacles, aprons, masks).
- Covering skin lesions with waterproof dressings.
- Washing and cleaning wounds.
- Try to avoid wading or swimming in potentially contaminated water.
- Washing after exposure to urine splashes or contaminated soil or water.
- Avoiding or preventing urine splashes and aerosols, avoiding touching ill or dead animals.
- Strictly maintaining hygienic measures during care or handling all animals, disinfecting contaminated areas.
- Consuming clean drinking-water.



